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U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

COLORADO

1990 ANNUAL REPORT

COMPLETED

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STATE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Bob Moore
Colorado State Director

It is my pleasure to present the first Annual Report from the Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Although I have a long association with the BLM, 1990 was my first year as Colorado's State Director.

This state's public lands have unlimited potential for multiple uses. Colorado's emphasis in 1990 was to increase recreational uses while maintaining the viability of our traditional uses.

The 1990 World Mountain Bike Championships were held in Durango in September.

Through the efforts of the BLM and many volunteers, the Kokopelli's and the Tabeguache Trails were dedicated and are now enjoyed by hundreds of mountain bike enthusiasts as well as hikers.

Two Colorado National Back Country Byways were dedicated: the Gold Belt Tour near Cañon City and the Alpine Loop near Montrose. BLM's back country byways are a unique opportunity for the public to enjoy Colorado's outdoors from a two-wheel or four-wheel-drive vehicle. They also have endless opportunities for picnicking, camping, hiking, sightseeing, and photography.

The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area was established through a cooperative agreement between BLM and the Colorado Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. This area is renowned nationwide for its whitewater boating and fishing opportunities.

The Four Corners Tribute held in June 1990 at the Anasazi Heritage Center was a cooperative event among Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah to promote cultural resources. The Anasazi Heritage Center, a BLM museum for the study and interpretation of Anasazi and other prehistoric cultures in the Four Corners region, was the site of the successful celebration.

These activities are only a beginning for Colorado BLM. With increasing populations and numerous outdoor recreational opportunities, we plan to provide additional avenues in Colorado for outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy the public lands which belong to all of us.

PUBLIC LANDS IN COLORADO

- 8.3 Million Acres
- 3.1 Million Recreation Visitors (1990)
- 46 Developed Recreational Sites
- 130,000 Volunteer Hours Donated (1990)
- 430,000 Acres Recommended for Wilderness Designation
- 7.4 Million Acres Leased for Oil and Gas (1990)
- 10.6 Million Tons of Coal Produced (1989)
- 7.6 Million Barrels of Oil Produced (1989)
- 55,000 Mining Claims Currently Active (1990)
- 2.6 Million Acres of Woodlands
- 600 Wildlife Species
- 7.9 Million Acres of Small Game Habitat
- 7 Million Acres of Big Game Habitat
- 39,000 Acres of Waterfowl Habitat
- 50,000 Acres of Riparian Habitat
- 1,500 Miles of Fishable Streams
- 4 Managed Wild Horse Areas
- 7.7 Million Acres Grazed by Livestock

Front Cover Photos (L to R):

· The BLM Craig District Office held a joint meeting and field trip with Routt National Forest employees. Here, the group tours a rig drilling a horizontal well.

· BLM built this kiosk overlooking Buena Vista as part of the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area.

· BLM personnel talk with the town of Rangely's Director of Economic Development about developing self-guided auto tours to see local rock art.

What is the Bureau of Land Management?

The General Land Office and the U.S. Grazing Service were merged in 1946 to create the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM administers those lands still remaining from the original public domain. Of the 1.8 billion acres of public land originally acquired by the United States, two-thirds went to individuals, industries, and the states. Of that remaining, much was set aside for national forests, wildlife refuges, national parks and monuments, and other public purposes, leaving BLM to manage over 270 million acres—about one-eighth of the nation. Colorado alone has over 8 million acres of public land. BLM in Colorado also manages the mineral estate underlying 27.3 million acres, 19 million acres of which are administered or owned by other agencies or private interests.

Thirty years after BLM's formation, Congress passed the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) mandating that public lands be managed for multiple use and sustained yield. BLM has responsibility for managing the nation's public lands and resources in a combination of ways that best serve the needs of the American people. Traditional uses of the public lands have been grazing, timber, and minerals and energy development. Current administration has put emphasis on increasing BLM's role in other areas, such as recreation, fish and wildlife, wilderness, and natural scenic, scientific and cultural values.

Pride In Our Past—Confidence In Our Future

Recreation

BLM Colorado has an outstanding and increasingly visible recreation program. In addition to the unique diversity and the wide open spaces of the public lands, BLM administers 20 developed recreation sites, 190 miles of hiking and 350 miles of mountain biking trails, two National Back Country Byways, and numerous historic areas. BLM also manages outstanding river recreation on the Arkansas, Colorado, Yampa, Gunnison, and Dolores Rivers. Compared with other BLM states, Colorado ranked third in the total number of recreation visits in 1990.

Fish and Wildlife

BLM's public lands provide habitat for over 600 species of fish and wildlife, and 100 special status plants and animals. In 1990, big game winter habitat was improved through four cooperatively funded projects with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (prescribed burns, roller-chopping sagebrush stands to enhance plant vigor and production), and five projects with the Colorado Division of Wildlife that involved improving waterfowl habitat, bighorn sheep winter range, and a raptor data base program. Cooperative efforts were continued with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Colorado Division of Wildlife to determine suitability of prairie dog habitat for reintroducing the federal endangered black-footed ferret on public lands.

In the fall of 1990, BLM formally designated Colorado's first "Watchable Wildlife" area—the Georgetown Bighorn Sheep Viewing Area along I-70 west of Denver.

Riparian Program

BLM Colorado manages nearly 47,000 acres of riparian areas associated with over 5,500 miles of perennial intermittent streams; plus about 11,000 acres of wetlands associated with marshes, seeps, and springs. Riparian areas, which are the single most important habitat for fish and wildlife in the West, are the bands of green near streams, springs, lakes, and other sources of water.

One hundred and twelve riparian improvement projects (willow planting, salt-cedar control, bank stabilization measures, instream structures for grade control and wetland development) were completed in 1990. Many of these projects were completed with the help of BLM partners including Trout Unlimited, Audubon Society, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Sierra Club, Boy Scouts, Durango High School Ecology Club, Ft. Lewis College, Univ. of Colorado, Univ. of No. Arizona, and numerous local landowners and permittees.

Range

Colorado's 8.3 million acres of public lands are divided into 2,432 grazing allotments. In 1990, grazing permits were issued to more than 900 livestock operators to graze primarily cattle, but also horses and sheep. The grazing fee from 3-1-90 to 2-28-91 was $1.81.

Domestic livestock consumed nearly 400,000 animal unit months (the amount of forage necessary to sustain one cow and one calf or its equivalent for one month). BLM's range conservationists are responsible for the management of vegetation on public lands, and administer the commercial use of BLM rangelands by livestock.

Wild Horses

Colorado has four wild horse herd management areas: Piceance-East Douglas Creek west of Meeker (200 horses), Sand Wash in the extreme northwestern part of the state (130 horses); Little Bookcliffs northeast of Grand Junction (125 horses), and Spring Creek southwest of Montrose (80 horses). BLM manages these herds as permanent residents in these four areas. Since the horses have few natural predators, the herd sizes can expand beyond the capability of the range to support them. BLM then rounds up the excess animals and makes them available for adoption by qualified private citizens. In Colorado, we have a partnership called the Colorado Wild Horse-Inmate Program. In operation since 1986, the program allows carefully selected inmates at the Cañon City prison to gentle wild horses, making the animals offered for adoption more marketable.

In 1990, 45 horses were removed from the drought-stricken Little Bookcliffs Herd Management Area. A decision to roundup 40-60 horses from the Spring Creek Management Area was appealed to the Interior Board of Appeals by the Animal Protection Institute. All herd areas were monitored, and several springs and fences were maintained. The Wild Horse-Inmate Program gentled over 400 horses and maintained an average of 300 head prior to shipment to BLM adoption centers.

The Collegiate Peaks Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Colorado Division of Wildlife assisted BLM with the LaGarita Stream Restoration Project in the San Luis Valley. The group worked to stabilize the stream bank and build fish habitat.

Wilderness

BLM's wilderness program has been controversial in Colorado, primarily because of sensitivity over water rights. In 1990, BLM completed the final three Wilderness Environmental Impact Statements which concluded the study of 800,000 acres in 57 areas for wilderness designation. In 1991, BLM recommended to the Department of the Interior that approximately 430,000 acres, or slightly more than 50 percent of the study acreage, be formally designated as wilderness.

Cultural Resources

Colorado has one of the most significant cultural and historic resource programs in the BLM. There are more than 50,000 recorded prehistoric sites on Colorado public lands. The BLM Anasazi Heritage Center, located near Dolores, is a museum for the study and interpretation of prehistoric cultures in the Four Corners region (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah). In addition to storing almost two million artifacts, samples, and documents, the Center includes exhibits, research laboratories, a library, a theater, and conference rooms. The Anasazi Heritage Center hosted the week-long "Adventures in the Past" celebration in June 1990.

Lands and Realty

In 1990, nearly 7,000 acres were acquired in six exchanges. These land exchanges enhanced riparian, public access, wildlife, and recreation management opportunities on adjacent public lands. For example, the Carsten exchange involved acquisition of 3,343 acres valuable for riparian and public access. This exchange resulted in ownership consolidation along 6-1/2 miles of Beaver Creek, a tributary of the San Miguel River, in southwestern Colorado. Over 250 rights-of-way were issued for uses such as natural gas pipelines, access roads, communication sites, and power lines.

The Recreation and Public Purposes Act was used to assist the Community of Placerville by providing a site for a fire station and adjacent park land.

Forestry

BLM public lands include 600,000 acres of commercial forest and 2.5 million acres of woodland. The forestry workload in 1990 consisted of planting and thinning about 500 acres, administering the sale of 4 million board feet of timber products, 12,000 cords of firewood, and 9,000 Christmas trees.

Visitors tour BLM's Lowry Ruin, a stabilized and interpreted archaeological site, managed by the San Juan Resource Area.

Over 300 people attended the dedication of Colorado's first Watchable Wildlife area. The Georgetown Wildlife Viewing Area was designed in the shape of a ram's horn, for the 175 bighorn sheep that browse the nearby public lands. The site of the viewing area was patented to the City of Georgetown through a Recreation and Public Purposes lease.

Participants at the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area dedication enjoyed a raft trip down the Arkansas River.

Support Services

Law Enforcement/Resource Protection

It is BLM's responsibility to protect the valuable resources found on Colorado's public lands, and enforce public land laws. Because Colorado's three special agents and three rangers have lots of ground to cover, they work closely with local, state, and other federal law enforcement agencies. The primary function of our Rangers is patrolling public lands, and assisting public land users. During 1990, the Rangers assisted the public by providing information concerning BLM lands, offering emergency assistance, and promoting a positive land use ethic. Special Agents generally conduct investigations to solve land use crimes.

Fire Program

Most of Colorado's public lands were very dry going into the summer of 1990. Fire bans were set by BLM and other federal and state agencies as early as June. Luckily, the state had high precipitation during July which lessened the fire danger. In 1990, 1,000 acres were burned by 31 human-caused fires; 4,000 acres were burned by 378 lightening-caused fires. In addition to fighting wildfires on public lands, BLM uses prescribed fire to achieve planned resource management objectives in range, wildlife, forestry, and other programs. Over 1,500 acres were burned by 30 prescribed fires in 1990. During the year, fire personnel promoted fire prevention with Smokey and the American Cowboy, and various other educational programs.

Cadastral Survey

BLM is the legal land surveying agency for the United States government. The Land Ordinance Act of 1785 passed by the Continental Congress created the basis for our land tenure system and limited official land survey authority to one agency. The Cadastral Survey Program monuments and documents the legal boundaries between public and private lands for both the surface and subsurface states for the BLM and all other Federal agencies dealing with public lands. Equipment and techniques have changed through the years—the BLM's responsibilities and legal requirements have not. In 1990, Colorado BLM conducted official land surveys for itself, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and the public sector.

In September 1990, BLM dedicated remonumentation of the survey point where the Colorado and Kansas line meets Oklahoma. The corner marker had been missing for more than 70 years.

Public Affairs

The public affairs staff assisted managers and program specialists to communicate BLM's mission and accomplishments to the public, through news releases, publications, exhibits, and special events. Other responsibilities included maintaining relationships with Congressional representatives, other agencies, and special interest groups.

Volunteer Program

Colorado volunteers have built mountain bike and hiking trails, led interpretive walks, assisted archaeologists, and helped with administrative work. In 1990, over 1,400 volunteers donated 130,000 hours valued at $1,293,000. Cost of managing the program was $101,500.

Equal Employment Opportunity

BLM seeks to hire the best people for the job. We participated in a variety of career fairs and events across the state encouraging students to consider a career in natural resource management. In 1990, BLM employed seven cooperative education students, two of whom were converted to full-time career employees. The cooperative education program allows students to work part-time while completing their education.

Modernization/Automation

The Automation/Information Resources Management/ Modernization (AIM) initiatives have been moving forward at a rapid pace. Colorado's AIM initiative is designed for collecting, storing, and providing rapid retrieval of public land information to the public and private sectors. In 1990, FTS 2000, a state-of-the-art telephone network, was installed across Colorado. FTS 2000 saves equipment costs because it transmits data in digital form. It also provides better quality voice transmissions and allows video conferencing.

Personnel

Colorado BLM has 530 employees and 18 offices statewide (office locations on back). In addition, BLM hires seasonal employees to help with fighting wildfires, assisting cadastral survey crews, and completing other field work.

Engineering

In Colorado, BLM owns approximately 98 buildings located on 28 administrative sites and 61 recreation sites. BLM is also responsible for maintaining a transportation system consisting of about 4,000 miles of road, 200 miles of trails, and 10 bridges. During 1990, Colorado Engineering Section provided construction and maintenance assistance on more than 440 projects, completed 39 easement surveys, and provided dam safety inspections as needed.

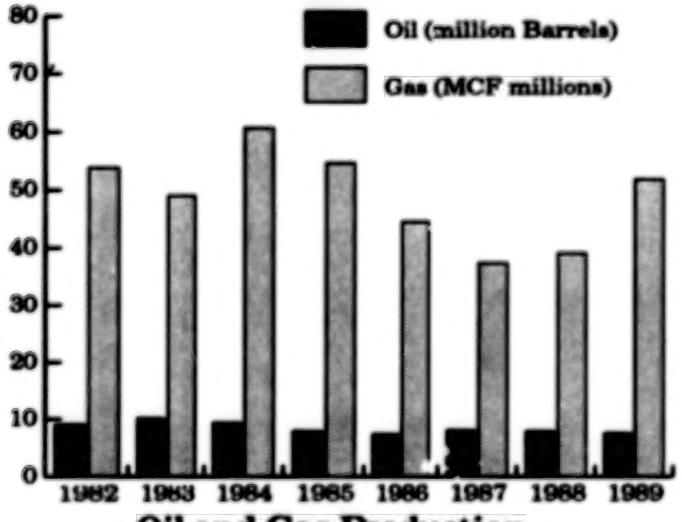
Energy and Minerals Program

BLM's energy and minerals program produces more revenue for the Federal Treasury than any other BLM program. Only the Internal Revenue Service and the Minerals Management Service provide greater revenues governmentwide. The minerals program has three goals: orderly and timely resource development, environmental protection, and a reasonable return to the Federal Treasury for use of government lands and resources.

Because BLM has subsurface minerals management responsibility under national forests, Indian reservations, and some private lands, BLM manages 27.3 million acres in the minerals program in Colorado, over three times its surface acreage responsibility.

Oil and Gas

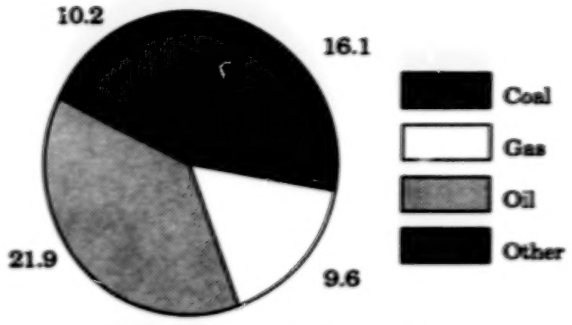
In 1990, BLM administered nearly 9,000 leases on about 7.4 million acres in Colorado. We offered a total of 423 leases at four competitive lease auctions during 1990. Two hundred and forty-two of these leases were sold, generating over $2.8 million in bids. After the public lands are leased for exploration and development, BLM is responsible for inspecting drilling and production operations on those leases. There are about 1,000 producing oil wells on federal and Indian lands in Colorado, and about 3,000 producing gas wells. In 1990, we issued 232 drilling permits, and 88 new wells were drilled.



Oil and Gas Production

Coal

BLM manages 103 federal coal leases in Colorado, primarily in the northwest part of the state. In 1989, production from active federal coal leases totalled about 10.6 million tons with a market value of $215 million. This constituted nearly two-thirds of all coal produced in Colorado.



1989 Mineral Royalties
(Dollars in Millions)

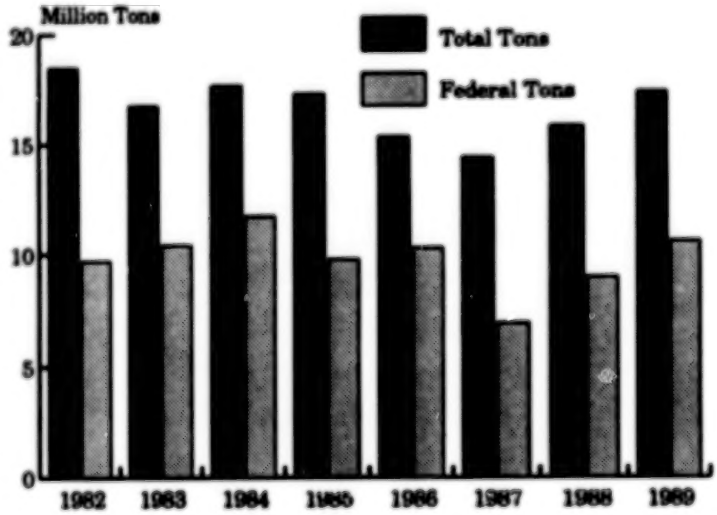
One-half of the money goes to the State of Colorado. The other half goes to the Federal Treasury.

Coal Bed Methane

A program that continued to boom on Colorado's federal lands is drilling for coal bed methane (70 new wells). Driving the boom was a 1990 Congressional tax incentive to produce this alternative energy resource. The tax credit, which was to expire December 1990, has been extended for two years.

Mining

The 1872 Mining Law provides the opportunity for exploration and development of mineral deposits on public lands. BLM records all mining claims filed on public lands and receives affidavits of assessment work and other documents, thus providing a central location for all Colorado mining activity records for federal mineral estates. Currently, there are approximately 55,000 mining claims on Colorado public lands. Panning for gold continued to be popular in the state. As of 1990, Colorado had 500 unpatented oil shale claims containing 80,000 acres. One hundred and ninety-six of these claims (30,000 acres) are under application for patents.



Coal Production

All graphs represent 1989 figures. 1990 numbers were not available at time of publication.

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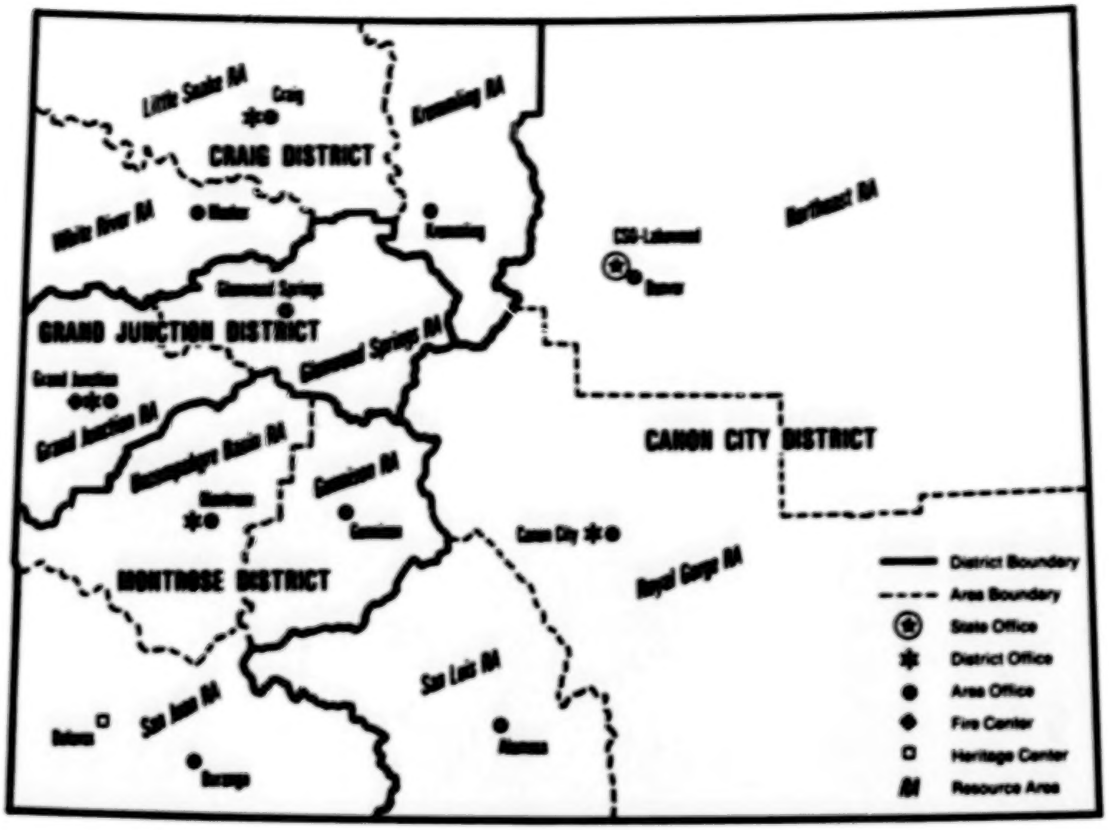

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